

## **Why Linguists Think The Way They Do About Syntax: autonomy, computation and universality**

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Psychologists, philosophers, and to be honest, many others are often perplexed by why linguists think about syntax the way they do. Surely syntax is really just a side effect of meaning? And surely the ways that words are ordered depend on the frequencies of what we hear when we learn languages? And how can a system of rules be subject to computational efficiency, as syntacticians often claim? Surely it's parsing that's the computation, not the rules? And how can syntax be universal, when languages differ so much? Are syntacticians crazy, or is there some good set of reasons to think in this unintuitive way about language, (which is a system for communicating, isn't it?).